

Reference excerpts

Programme standards and practices (2014)

MYP requirements for leadership and structure

The school's organizational structures support the implementation of all subject groups offered by the school, approaches to learning, service and the personal project (or community project for programmes that end in MYP year 3 or 4). (B1.6a)

MYP requirements for the written curriculum

The written curriculum includes an approaches to learning planning chart for all years of the programme. (C2.1b)

There is a system for the regular review of individual unit plans and of the planning of approaches to learning skills. (C2.1f)

Shared IB practice for collaborative planning

Collaborative planning and reflection addresses vertical and horizontal articulation. (C1.3)

MYP: From principles into practice (2014)

Approaches to learning (ATL) leadership

The IB does not require schools to appoint teacher(s) to lead the planning of ATL. However, responsibility for planning ATL in all years of the MYP includes:

- ensuring that teachers understand ATL skills and their role in the programme
- helping to decide how ATL can be addressed by subject-specific content and special activities
- developing a plan for the vertical articulation of ATL skills across all years of the programme
- supporting teachers in developing teaching strategies for ATL skills.

School leadership structures and responsibilities

Teachers can work with librarians to ensure the vertical and horizontal planning of ATL skills in all subjects.

Planning a coherent curriculum

The written curriculum is a formal, comprehensive, school-wide set of documents written by the school that describes what will be taught in each subject to each age group. The MYP presents schools with a framework within which schools are expected to develop their own written curriculum, whether this includes external requirements or not. It is acknowledged that many schools will not have autonomy in deciding subject content. The development of learner profile attributes, conceptual understanding, incorporation of global contexts and approaches to learning (ATL) skills is a school-based process.

Curriculum development centres on four major elements.

- Key and related concepts
- Global contexts

- ATL skills
- Subject-group objectives

From these elements, documents such as subject group overviews and unit planners will be developed through vertical and horizontal planning. In the written curriculum, MYP teachers can plan for service activities arising from inquiry that will be engaging and relevant to students.

Whole-school curricular planning

Horizontal planning

To explore subject content fully using the key concepts and global contexts, a collaborative approach to planning and teaching is essential. This allows teachers to communicate regularly on matters concerning content and pedagogy. Planning horizontally will involve teachers of the same year level working together between and within subject areas to plan the scope of learning in a particular year.

Documenting the MYP curriculum

The MYP **required documentation** for the written curriculum consists of:

- unit plans
- subject-group overviews
- ATL planning.

ATL planning

Using the ATL skills framework, teachers can develop a progression of ATL skills to be taught and formatively assessed at different stages of the programme.

Review of the written curriculum

Schools must put in place the necessary systems for the regular review of the written curriculum, including individual units of work as well as the planning of approaches to learning (ATL), through reflection upon subject-group overviews.

Guide to school authorization: Middle Years Programme (2014)

Standard B1: Leadership and structure

Standard B1: Leadership and structure The school's leadership and administrative structures ensure the implementation of the IB programme(s).	A school offering the Middle Years Programme must ensure that:	Authorization (Oct 2016)	Evaluation (Jan 2017)
6a. The school's organizational structures support the implementation of all subject groups offered by the school, approaches to learning, service and the personal project (or community project for programmes that end in MYP year 3 or 4).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the organizational structure includes leadership for curriculum development in subject groups. • the organizational structure supports the implementation of approaches to learning, service and the personal project (or community project if the programme at the school ends with MYP year 3 or 4). 	X	X

Standard C1: Collaborative planning

Standard C1: Collaborative planning Collaborative planning and reflection supports the implementation of the IB programme(s).	A school offering the Middle Years Programme must ensure that:	Authorization (Oct 2016)	Evaluation (Jan 2017)
1a. The school has an approach to curriculum planning that involves all MYP teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all MYP teachers are involved in collaborative planning of the curriculum to meet the requirements of the MYP. 	X	X
1b. Collaborative planning and reflection facilitates interdisciplinary learning to strengthen cross-curricular skills and the deepening of disciplinary understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teachers plan collaboratively to create interdisciplinary units that strengthen cross-curricular skills and deepen disciplinary understanding. 		X
3. Collaborative planning and reflection addresses vertical and horizontal articulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> allocated meeting time is used to plan and reflect upon the vertical articulation of the curriculum. allocated meeting time is used to plan and reflect upon the horizontal articulation of the curriculum. allocated meeting time is used to plan and reflect upon the vertical and horizontal planning of approaches to learning skills. 		X

Standard C2: Written curriculum

Standard C2: Written curriculum The school's written curriculum reflects IB philosophy.	A school offering the Middle Years Programme must ensure that:	Authorization (Oct 2016)	Evaluation (Jan 2017)
1b. The written curriculum includes an approaches to learning planning chart for all years of the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it has documented the planning of approaches to learning skills throughout the years of the MYP taught at the school. <p><i>Note: At authorization schools must demonstrate that the documented planning of approaches to learning skill is in development.</i></p>	X	X
1c. The written curriculum includes subject group overviews for each subject group offered for each year of the programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the subject group overview for each subject group identifies the units to be taught in each year of the MYP, indicating unit title, key and related concepts, global contexts, statement of inquiry, MYP subject group objectives, approaches to learning skills and content (topics, knowledge, skills). 	X	X
1f. There is a system for the regular review of individual unit plans and of the planning of approaches to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it has put in place the necessary systems for the regular review of the written curriculum, including individual units as well as the planning of 		X

learning skills.	approaches to learning, through reflection upon the subject group overviews.		
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Clarifications

The centrality of ATL in IB programmes

One of the most important changes in the MYP curriculum framework is its clear focus on approaches to learning (ATL), or learning how to learn. This fundamental aspect of the MYP is elevated beyond its former function as one of five areas of interaction, drawing attention to a developmentally crucial task for 11- to 16-year-olds. ATL now stands near the centre of all IB programme models, alongside approaches to teaching. Across the IB continuum, five broad categories of ATL skills represent aligned language and educational through-lines that can inform and structure skills development for all students.

The role of ATL in the MYP

Because of its structural importance in the programme and its real-world relevance to students, ATL appears in many IB documents, including numerous places in MYP subject guides and *MYP: From principles into practice* (May 2014). ATL is the subject of specific standards and practices, as well as multiple MYP requirements that must be met for programme authorization and evaluation.

It is important to distinguish between good practice in education, MYP curriculum design and the evidence schools must gather to demonstrate the fidelity of their implementation of the programme. These aspects are all worthy of inquiry, action and reflection, and they overlap substantially. For ATL, the distinction might look like the following.

Good practice	MYP design/requirements	Evidence for IB processes
Creating time and space for teachers to work together	Collaborative planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agendas and outcomes of relevant faculty meetings and in-school professional development Master schedule with collaborative planning time Year-level team meeting agendas and outcomes Subject-group or department meeting agendas and outcomes MYP unit plans (especially reflection section)
Planning for a progression of learning across students' years of study	Vertical articulation (including ATL skills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject-group overviews Subject-group or department meeting agendas and outcomes ATL planning chart
Coordinating students' learning experience in the programme	Horizontal articulation (including ATL skills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master schedule Year-level team meeting agendas and outcomes MYP interdisciplinary units Year-level group learning engagements and special projects across subject groups

In the MYP, ATL skills are central to the programme's effective implementation. The ATL skills framework, is available as an appendix in *MYP: From principles into practice*, is meant to be:

- integral to unit planning
- both subject-specific and general
- owned by individual students
- inclusive of "soft skills"
- used as a tool to promote continuity and coordination of students' educational experience and personal development in the programme
- informed by the values represented in the IB learner profile.

The objective of horizontally and vertically articulated curriculum is the expedient, efficient, meaningful, common-sense provision of continuity and purpose in students' learning (in the classroom and, ideally, extending into their communities beyond school). By coordinating ATL effectively, schools provide students with purposeful opportunities to use, reinforce, extend and improve new and existing skills in increasingly complex familiar and unfamiliar situations.

Perspectives and contributors

An important aspect of the MYP focus on ATL is the creation of a community of lifelong learners in which everyone has a role to play.

- Teachers: Planning MYP units and taking part in conversations about horizontal and vertical articulation of ATL skills
- Coordinators: Communicating and interpreting programme requirements; planning ATL throughout the programme; supporting teachers as they plan and articulate ATL horizontally and vertically
- Year leaders: Facilitating horizontal articulation
- Subject group/department leaders: Managing vertical articulation
- Curriculum directors and instructional coaches: Conducting needs assessments and planning professional development
- Librarians: Facilitating horizontal and vertical articulation as central points of contact, especially for information and media literacy skills
- Counsellors: Supporting and planning the development of affective skills
- Administrators: Creating and protecting sufficient time and resource to support ATL development as a part of the school's coordination of curriculum through effective horizontal and vertical articulation
- Parents: Providing feedback about skills development, celebrating growth, promoting open communication and understanding the importance of ATL skills in the context of lifelong learning
- Students: Growing in awareness of and responsibility for developing skills and using them in increasingly complex combinations and applications

Required documentation for ATL planning

An important outcome of the MYP's review has been a commitment to lower the administrative burden required of coordinators and school communities for the IB's authorization and evaluation processes. The intent has been to limit required documentation—not every aspect of programme design and school practice must be verified with written evidence. The larger goal of implementation and evaluation is to prompt and verify schools' commitment to continual improvement of MYP implementation through meaningful self-evaluation, not to create a paper trail for visiting teams. Required documents need not be produced merely to create evidence of the school's implementation of programme standards and practices.

Rather, as part of the authorization and evaluation process, schools collect living, working documents that represent snapshots of progress on their MYP journey.

An ATL planning chart is part of the documentation of the written curriculum required for programme evaluation. (For programme authorization, schools must demonstrate that they have begun ATL planning.) A chart is a tabular presentation of information, and it may take many forms. This chart's purpose is to provide evidence for the vertical articulation of ATL skills across the years of the programme. Along the course of a school's MYP journey, the ATL chart may be developed in many ways. Over time, the chart may become more detailed and comprehensive. The chart may instead reflect the school's current emphasis and work plans in terms of ATL skills development.

While the ATL planning chart does not have to document horizontal articulation of ATL skills, it may include a record of horizontal planning. Schools must, however, document that they have structured **time** in which teachers can plan for horizontal articulation of ATL skills across grade or year levels. This horizontal planning time also supports the development of meaningful interdisciplinary learning, including required MYP interdisciplinary units.

Some possible approaches to developing an ATL planning chart

1. Collate and organize ATL columns from the subject-group overviews (or by subject/discipline) into a single document for analysis, for both subject-specific and more general ATL skills. Look for overlap, repetition, unexpected sequences and complex skills for which students may be under-prepared. By subject group or year level, undertake a revision of the chart and make an action plan that identifies and prioritizes specific areas for improvement.
2. Identify a specific skill or set of skills that needs development in the school, based on student needs or local/national curriculum requirements. Use structures and standards from other organizations to plan specific MYP learning engagements and assessment tasks that scaffold student performance and demonstrate a progression of learning for ATL skill categories or clusters.
3. Research existing standards and frameworks. Some state or national systems identify performance expectations that are built year-on-year with increasingly sophisticated descriptions of what students are supposed to learn and be able to do. Many of these standards are easily mapped against MYP ATL skills, and frameworks not developed by the IB can be used to inform the coordinated development of MYP ATL skills. The MYP ATL skills framework can work in harmony with initiatives like the American Association of School Librarians Standards for the 21st Century Learner, Big6™ research strategies, International Society for Technology in Education Standards for Students, US Common Core State Standards, and the Framework for 21st Century Learning.
4. Reflect on the developmental needs of students across the years of the programme and plan advisory/advocacy programmes that deal with expected personal and academic challenges faced by early and mid-adolescents (including transitions between schools, programmes and year levels). This kind of planning is especially relevant for social and self-management skills (working with others, managing time, and tasks and managing states of mind).
5. Create structured and coordinated, year-by-year approaches to common academic and personal skills that promote success at school and the world beyond (for example, how to deal with homework, manage time, exercise responsible digital citizenship, make good choices).
6. Attend to the purposeful development of and feedback on "soft skills" (competencies in areas such as making decisions, showing commitment, being flexible, leading and following, working as a team, accepting responsibility, dealing with stress, learning from mistakes, winning and losing gracefully).
7. Consider MYP ATL skill clusters systematically for each year of the programme, planning special events or ongoing initiatives of increasing complexity and sophistication. These events can provide students with opportunities to practise new skills, give and receive peer feedback about skill development, and build metacognitive awareness of their growing competency.
8. Conduct a task analysis of complex, subject-specific or interdisciplinary MYP year 5 assessments (or expected tasks in Diploma Programme courses) and plan backwards in a systematic way (scaffold over the years of the programme or coordinate across one or more subject groups) how to develop the necessary skills and sub-skills that students need in order to complete the task successfully.

9. Revisit and revise existing ATL planning documents (from areas of interaction planning in existing IB World Schools) according to IB ATL skill categories and MYP skill clusters. Reflect on how well the documents represent what is really happening in the programme. Identify a practical number of areas for improvement and create a step-by-step approach to making positive change that leads to more effective vertical articulation of ATL skills.
10. Set aside time for an ATL retreat, documenting its planning and outcomes. Provide possible structures, examples or a suggested template and process, but invite working groups and teams to create ATL charts that meet the needs of their own working style and have the greatest potential for helping students to become self-regulated, lifelong learners. Share the results.
11. Coordinate meeting time for teachers to reflect on ATL development, as recorded in MYP unit plans, for a specified period or subject group. Provide questions for reflection such as the following.
 - Which ATL skills can be reinforced across the curriculum given the concurrency of learning for individual students and groups of students?
 - How can teachers efficiently introduce and scaffold the development of ATL skills across subject groups?
 - What interdisciplinary units can support the development of ATL skills?
 - Which school programmes and extracurricular activities provide additional opportunities for students to take ownership of their own ATL skill development?
 - Are ATL skills developed at increasing level of demand and sophistication across the years of the programme and course sequences within subject groups?

The meeting's process and its outcomes can be captured in an ATL planning chart.

12. Conduct an audit of the programme, identifying existing strengths and opportunities for growth. The chart might include, for example, information about ATL articulation in unit planning (especially summative assessment demands), student self-assessment, MYP projects, extra- or co-curricular activities, and advisory or student life.

Frequently asked questions

With this background in mind, following are succinct answers to some frequently asked questions.

Should I give students ATL grades?

No.

Are schools required to give parents/guardians feedback about students' development of ATL skills?

No, but some schools find this to be a useful component of a standard or alternative reporting cycle, at least for some ATL skill clusters. Where possible, team-level conversations about the development of individual students' ATL skills promote a holistic approach to assessment and reporting. To increase student ownership, some schools promote students' self-evaluation of growth in ATL skill development with an opportunity for teachers to comment on the student's reflection. Portfolio assessment can also be used to demonstrate growing competence from novice/beginning to learner/developing to practitioner/using to expert/sharing.

Does the MYP require schools to report on students' ATL skills development?

No.

Is it good practice to provide students feedback about ATL skills development?

Students learn best in a trusting environment in which they receive detailed, ongoing feedback about what they are doing well and what they need to practise in order to improve. Meaningful formative feedback can bring about lasting change. The long-term purpose of ATL in the MYP is to help students grow in their ability to monitor their own learning and manage themselves (alone and in a community of practice).

Is there a specific IB format for the required ATL planning chart?

No; evidence that shows how the school has met this requirement may take many forms. The chart exists as a record of important conversations and commitments in the past, as well as a revisable blueprint for the future. It is meant to be evidence from a lively process, not an overly complex tool that is onerous to create, difficult to use, and left sitting unused on the shelf or as a digital asset.

Do schools have to develop a detailed scope and sequence or formal curriculum map for teaching ATL skills?

No.

Is it necessary to plan for teaching, assessing and reporting on all five IB ATL skill categories?

No, but these categories can provide a useful organizing tool for managing the horizontal and vertical articulation of ATL skills (especially for schools offering another IB programme).

Is it necessary to plan for teaching, assessing and reporting on all 10 MYP ATL skill clusters?

No.

Is it necessary to plan for teaching, assessing and reporting on all 140 skills listed in the MYP ATL framework?

No.

Can we still use the detailed student learning expectations (SLE)—and previous work on the vertical and horizontal articulation of organization, collaboration, communication, information literacy, reflection, thinking and transfer—that we developed as part of our previous work to support ATL as one of the former areas of interaction?

Yes; many SLEs track very clearly into the new skills framework. The introduction of MYP ATL skill clusters offers a good opportunity to reflect on, and update, existing documents, plans, activities and curriculum review processes.

Is horizontal articulation of ATL skills required?

Yes, but schools are only required to demonstrate that teachers have time to work on this important aspect of curriculum planning. Robust horizontal articulation (year-level planning across subject groups) will include discussion about ATL skills that cross disciplinary boundaries. The results of these discussions do not have to be documented in order to meet requirements for MYP authorization and evaluation.

Do we have to provide documentary evidence of horizontal articulation of ATL skills?

No, but at evaluation and authorization schools must be able to identify resources for and commitment to collaborative planning that includes opportunities for both horizontal and vertical articulation of the curriculum.

Can I use my school's learning management system or curriculum planning software to create an ATL planning chart?

Yes.

Do we have to use the guidance in this document to develop ATL charts for each of the possible approaches discussed here?

No; these are suggestions, not requirements.

Can my school develop another kind of ATL chart altogether?

Yes! Using your creative professionalism, please pursue the objectives for vertical and horizontal articulation of MYP ATL skills. Refine your approach with other schools and networks. Then share your work with the wider MYP community on the online curriculum centre and in IB professional development workshops. We have much to learn from each other.

Is it OK simply to copy another school's ATL planning chart and make it our own through some simple modifications?

A strength of the IB community is its willingness to share information and experience in formal and informal networks. School examples can provide inspiration and possible models to follow. However, it is the development of context-specific horizontal and vertical articulation, ATL planning charts, subject-group overviews and MYP unit plans that creates effective and authentic learning environments.

What are the relationships among approaches to teaching, approaches to learning and approaches to teaching and learning in the IB Diploma Programme?

Approaches to teaching and learning is an umbrella term that describes the educational approach (the "how" or praxis of schooling) in IB programmes, encompassing both pedagogy (teaching practice) and skills development (student learning).